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Director

# County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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Board of Supervisors

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April 4, 2006

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**REQUEST FOR INTERIM ORDINANCE AUTHORITY POSITIONS TO SUPPORT CHILD  
SAFETY AND PERMANENCY THROUGH EXPANSION OF TEAM DECISION MAKING,  
THE PERMANENCY PARTNERS PROGRAM, AUGMENTATION OF EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE, KINSHIP SUPPORT DIVISION, MENTORING RESOURCES, HUMAN  
RESOURCES DIVISION AND SUPPORT THE COUNTYWIDE ROLL-OUT OF THE  
CONCURRENT PLANNING REDESIGN  
(ALL SUPERVISORAL DISTRICTS) – (3 VOTES)**

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:**

1. Approve interim ordinance authority for 301 positions pursuant to County Code Section 6.06.020 for positions to support child safety and permanency as follows: thirty-six (36) Supervising Children Social Workers (SCSW), and thirteen (13) Intermediate Typist Clerks (ITC) to expand Team Decision Making (TDM); thirty-nine (39) Children Social Worker IIIs (CSW), six (6) SCSWs, one (1) Senior Typist Clerk (STC), eight (8) ITCs, four (4) Adoption Assistants, and two (2) Children Services Administrator Is (CSA I), to roll out Concurrent Planning Redesign (CPR); eighty (80) as-needed CSWs, twelve (12) as-needed SCSWs, one (1) STC, and one (1) CSA I for the expansion of the Permanency Partners Program (P3); fifty-five (55) CSWs to provide enhanced support to child safety in Emergency Response (ER) and Homeless Outreach; sixteen (16) CSWs, seventeen (17) ITCs, and two (2) SCSWs to enhance Kinship Support; and, one (1) Public Health Nurse, two (2) Department Personnel Assistants, two (2) Payroll Clerk IIs, two (2) Administrative Services Manager Is, and one (1) Senior Departmental Personnel Technician to support Human



Resources. The staff costs to expand each of these initiatives for the remainder of this fiscal year can be absorbed within the current budget due to anticipated savings in a variety of areas of the budget. The cost for staff for the expansion of each of these initiatives in FY 2006-07 is \$32.1 million which will be financed using approximately \$15.4 million federal revenue and \$16.7 million additional net County cost (NCC) which will be reflected in the FY 2006/07 Proposed County Budget.

2. Authorize the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to fill the above referenced positions with temporary appointments pending determination of the appropriate pay classification by the Department of Human Resources (DHR).

### **PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The purpose of the recommended actions is to enable DCFS to continue to realize significant improvements in its safety and permanency related outcomes. By expansion of these initiatives and programs countywide, DCFS will be able to improve child safety, reduce the placement of children in foster care and reduce the time children spend in care through family reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. The requested interim ordinance authority for CPR reflects only the positions needed to continue roll-out of CPR through the end of FY 2005-06. Expansion of DCFS' Mentoring program unit in FY 2005-06 will be accomplished by redirecting three existing budgeted, vacant positions (three CSA Is) to the Mentoring Unit. The FY 2006-07 Proposed County Budget will include an additional 169 positions for CPR to accommodate full expansion in addition to the three positions for Mentoring that are not included in this interim ordinance authority request.

### **Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals**

The recommended actions are consistent with the principles of the Countywide Strategic Plan Goal 5: Children and Family Well-Being, as measured by the achievements in the five outcome areas adopted by the Board: good health; economic well-being; safety and survival; social and emotional well-being; and educational and workforce readiness. These actions are also consistent with the Department's goals of reduced timeliness to permanency; improved child safety, and reduced reliance on out-of-home care.

### **FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING**

The costs of the 301 interim ordinance authority positions needed to expand each of the initiatives for the remainder of this fiscal year can be absorbed within the current budget due to anticipated savings in a variety of areas of the budget. The cost for staff for the expansion in FY 2006-07, including full expansion of CPR and Mentoring, is \$32.5 million which will be financed using approximately \$15.6 million federal revenue and \$16.9 million additional NCC which will be reflected in the FY 2006/07 Proposed County Budget. The FY 2006-07 cost by program is as follows:



	<u>No.</u> <u>Positions</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>NCC</u>
P3	94	\$ 4,670,000	\$ 2,428,000
CPR	229	16,660,000	8,663,000
TDM	49	3,940,000	2,049,000
Kinship	35	2,170,000	1,128,000
ER	55	4,229,000	2,199,000
HR	8	466,000	242,000
Subtotal	470	32,135,000	16,709,000
Mentoring	4	346,000	180,000
Total	474	\$ 32,481,000	\$ 16,889,000

#### **FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

To improve safety and permanency outcomes for children, DCFS has embarked upon a comprehensive redesign and augmentation of its service delivery system as follows:

**TDM** is a multi-disciplinary case conference led by a neutral facilitator and includes the family, their supporters, caregivers, community members and all the professionals involved in the case. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure the family's full participation with the rest of the team in important placement related decisions and to ensure a network of support for the children and the adults who care for them. TDMs are held when: (a) children are at risk of placement; (b) placement moves are contemplated while children are in out-of-home care; and (c) children are returning home. Outcomes reported nationally from using the TDM model include fewer placements into out-of-home care, fewer replacements while in out-of-home care, and faster reunification due to more immediate access to individualized front-end services. The TDM process includes consideration of initiatives such as CPR and P3 with a goal for the family to achieve reduced reliance on out-of-home care and decrease timelines to legal permanency.

**CPR** provides safe and timely reunification of children with families. However, when children cannot be safely returned to their parents, CPR is designed to ensure the alternate legal permanent plan of adoption or legal guardianship is achieved as soon as possible. CPR has been successfully piloted in five offices throughout the County with a focus on reunifying families more quickly and reducing the time it takes to achieve legal permanency. The projected outcomes of CPR are as follows: (a) increased number of children reunified with their families and exiting care to a legally permanent home; (b) reduction in the time it takes to complete an adoption home-study with 80-90% of all home-studies completed prior to termination of parental rights; (c) increased number of children and older youth achieving alternate permanency through adoption or legal guardianship;



(d) decreased time it takes for a child to be reunified with their family, adopted or permanently placed in the home of a legal guardian resulting in decreased time for children in out-of-home care; (e) decreased time it takes to achieve adoption finalization; and, (f) reduced number of children entering into long term foster care. The interim ordinance authority requested for CPR represents one fourth of the annual need, and supports the rollout of CPR beyond the pilot phase in the remainder of this fiscal year. The additional 169 positions needed for CPR expansion in FY 2006-07 will be included in the FY 2006-07 Proposed County Budget.

**P3** is designed to aggressively address the approximately 7,000 youth that are 12 years old and older in long term foster care without a legal permanent plan to create permanency options through the use of Permanency Partners mediation. Since the inception of the P3 pilot on October 13, 2004, over 500 youth have been paired with Permanency Partners throughout the County, resulting in 33% having an identified plan of returning home, being adopted, achieving legal guardianship, or entering into an ongoing mentorship relationship. The addition of staff will allow the expansion of P3 and increase the number of youth exiting foster care to permanency.

Fifty-five (55) additional CSWs will be assigned to **ER**. Responding to child abuse and neglect referrals via ER is the first opportunity DCFS has to assess a child's safety and potential risk for future abuse or neglect. It is also the first opportunity to assess a family's strengths and to engage them in a process that will serve to maintain a child's safety and/or reduce their risk. To reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect, increased use of TDM and full participation of ER CSWs in the TDM process is needed. Augmentation of the ER staff will enable ER CSW participation in the TDM process. The staff augmentation will strategically support safety and permanency for all children that come to the Department's attention through ER. The additional ER CSWs will be assigned throughout the Department, at the Emergency Response Command Post, regional offices, and Homeless Outreach Team.

Additional **Kinship** support staff is needed as a result of expansion of P3, CPR and TDM. These programs place an active emphasis on relative and non-relative extended families as child placement resources and are an asset to stability and permanence. Currently, there are 11,264 children placed in relative care and approximately 8,291 receiving KinGAP payments. Kinship Support Division staff work in collaboration with regional staff and specialized programs to assess potential caregivers' availability and suitability as kin-placement resources, stabilize potential disruptions in current kin-care placements, and provide services and resources to families receiving KinGAP payments since there are no case management CSWs for families receiving KinGAP.

The Adoptions and Safe Families Act and Assembly Bill 1695 mandate that relative and non-relative extended family member homes must meet the same standards as licensed foster homes pursuant to Community Care Licensing provisions of the State of California. Criminal clearances, including Live Scan fingerprinting, must be completed and results



reviewed for each potential relative, non-relative extended family member caregiver, and adoptive parent. Implementation of these regulations contributes to the safety, support and maintenance of children placed with relative and non-relative extended family members. Safety is maximized, disruption is minimized, and permanency is expedited. The expansion of TDM, CPR, and P3 will increase the volume of relative and non-relative extended family member caregivers that will require timely reassessments, timely approvals and ongoing support.

**Human Resources** performs critical staff recruitment, retention and workforce support services to ensure that DCFS has the workforce capacity to support safety and permanency goals and best practice initiatives. The additional Human Resources staff will help to ensure better performance management of staff with timely corrective action taken when performance is at issue. If the capacity of Human Resources is not up to the increased demands of attracting, maintaining and providing performance management support for a larger and qualified workforce, the Department's service delivery goals will be directly impacted due to delays in achieving staffing targets, turnover and un-addressed/or delayed response to performance management issues. The additional Human Resources staff will enable DCFS to recruit, hire, and maintain a quality workforce that supports safety and permanency outcomes for children in Los Angeles County.

In 2005, California passed AB 1412 which expanded **mentoring** provisions first enacted in AB 408. AB 1412 requires social workers to ask foster youth in every type of out-of-home care placement about adult relationships that are important to them, to take actions to support and maintain those relationships and to explore them as potential permanency options. Mentors for foster youth can play an important role as life-long connections that may even become permanent through adoption or legal guardianship, especially for youth with no other family connections. Mentoring staff expansion is needed to support the January 4, 2005 Board instruction that the Department assume the leadership role with ICAN in achieving the goal of providing a mentor for every foster child by the year 2010. The Department redirected existing staff to work with the ICAN Task Force on Mentoring to develop the guidelines and a mentoring business plan. In October 2005, ICAN provided a status report containing the business plan and initial guidelines for mentoring foster youth. On October 11, 2005, your Board instructed the Director of DCFS to work in conjunction with the CAO to identify and allocate resources for mentoring. Expansion of the Mentoring unit in FY 2005-06 will be accomplished by redirecting existing budgeted, vacant positions.

All appointments to interim ordinance positions will be temporary pending DHR's determination of the appropriate pay class for the functions to be performed. In the event DHR determines lower level positions are more appropriate for the functions, the employees will be returned to the pay class they held prior to appointment to these temporary positions. If new hires are appointed to these positions, they will be subject to release from County employment or demotion.



The Department has 6,326 budgeted positions. Per the March 20 item control, 367 of the 6,326 positions are vacant, which is a 5.8% vacancy rate. This vacancy rate is consistent with the Department's overall attrition rate.

The Eligibility Worker (EW), ITC and SCSW payclasses account for most of the vacancies (76, 51 and 59, respectively). The EW and SCSW eligible lists were recently promulgated, and the Department is in the process of filling the vacancies using the new eligible lists. (Note that 4 of the 76 vacant EW positions are targeted for deletion in FY 2006-07 and will, therefore, not be filled.)

There are 15 vacant CSA I positions. Of these, two are assigned to the Auditor Controller for group home auditing. The Department is in the process of filling the remaining 13 vacant items using a recently promulgated list of February 27, 2006, three of these positions will be utilized to expand the Mentoring unit.

Recruitment of ITCs is a Countywide issue. The Department, in conjunction with DHR, has an ongoing recruitment and interview process in place to fill ITC vacancies.

The CAO and DHR have reviewed and approved this Board letter.

#### **IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES**

Approval of the recommended actions will provide the Department with sufficient staff to: (a) conduct TDM's before every placement decision; (b) initiate the roll-out of CPR countywide; (c) expand P3; (d) make better decisions about child safety up front; (e) increase child safety and permanency through Kinship support; (f) develop necessary mentoring resources for foster children, and; (g) ensure a competent and skilled workforce through recruitment of quality new staff and effective performance management of existing staff. In summary, the recommended actions will improve DCFS' ability to make the best decisions about children and families, avoid unnecessary placements, and provide timely permanency for dependent youth.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Upon approval of the requested actions by the Board of Supervisors, it is requested that the Executive Officer/Clerk of the Board of Supervisors send one adopted copy of the Board letter to the following:

1. Department of Children and Family Services  
Budget Services  
425 Shatto Place, Room #203  
Los Angeles, California 90020  
Attn: Tito Barin, Budget Officer

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

April 4, 2006

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2. Department of Children and Family Services

Human Resources

425 Shatto Place

Los Angeles, California 90020

Attn: David Waage, Personnel Officer

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Sanders", written in a cursive style.

David Sanders, Ph.D.

Director

DS:TP:PC:ns

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
Department of Human Resources